

Council of the City of New Castle
Special Council Meeting
Town Hall – 201 Delaware Street – New Castle
Wednesday, June 1, 2016 10:00 a.m.

Call to Order

Roll Call

Councilperson Megginson

Councilperson Vannucci

Council President Ratchford

Councilperson Petty

Councilperson Di Mondì (left the meeting at 11:42)

Also present:

City Administrator, William Barthel

City Treasurer, Janet Carlin

City Solicitor, Dan Losco

Police Chief, Daniel Tjaden

Kathleen Walls, Finance Coordinator (joined the meeting at 10:55)

The meeting was called to order at 10:00

Council President opened the meeting; the meeting was called to get public comment on street parking issues in the City. After the public comment the City Solicitor and Police Chief will give their recommendations. President said the City Council's first priority is safety of the City residents.

City Administrator

Presented photographs of William Penn Court showing a blind curve on William Penn court.

President Ratchford said there was No Parking curbing painted in this area, and stated that this should have not been done until City Council had received input from residents in the area.

The Floor was opened for Public Comment:

Rev. Aaron Moore: Rev. Moore said he was speaking as a representative of the William Penn Community, he has been a resident for over 31 years, and said they have never had a parking issue. Rev Moore read a statement with the following questions.

- What precipitated the painting of the lines?
- What is the City Code regarding the painting of No Parking curbs?
- Was a resolution presented and voted on by City Council for the painting of the yellow lines?
- Was there an opportunity for community involvement?
- Who decided the one yellow line be removed and why?

Rev. Moore also presented a petition with 90% of community being opposed to the yellow lines. President Ratchford stated that this meeting was being held because the proper process was not followed, No Parking restrictions have historically been passed by Council. This meeting starts the process from the beginning; that is why the lines were painted over.

Mr. Barthel said the original request went to the Chief of Police; it was from a member of the community. The police made the recommendation to paint the no parking line saying it was a safety issue.

The City Solicitor cited Section 11 of the City Code, giving Council the authority to regulate streets, by putting up signs painting curbs, etc. He said the police have input as well under Delaware Code Title 21 Section 41:79 E16 that states there shall be no parking in places where such parking, standing or stopping obstructs free passage of traffic. When an area is not marked it becomes a discretionary issue for the police. If they feel a vehicle is blocking traffic they would issue a citation.

Chief Tjaden said he had looked at the area and recommended no parking in one side, but he feels there is room for cars to navigate the street.

Additional Public Comments:

Walter Owen - 2 William Penn Square: He would support having the yellow line, this has been an ongoing problem. There is a hairpin turn to turn off Rt. 9 onto William Penn Square, and you are turning off a road with high traffic. There is also a fire hydrant in the area.

Mara Latavitz: Mrs. Latavitz said she has lived on this street for 36 years. She feels cars are parking in front of her house from outside the neighborhood, and requested that the parking in front of her house be restricted.

Mr. Losco stated that if a car is legally tagged and parked, it cannot be towed or restricted from parking in the street.

Police officer Rogers said if a car is operable, and not abandoned the police cannot tow the vehicle. If they get a call regarding an abandoned car they will check the tags, and check the registration.

Motion to consider **Resolution 2016-24**; A Resolution regarding placement of No Parking/Yellow Line on William Penn Court was made by Councilperson Megginson and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci

Council President Ratchford read the Resolution

Council Comments:

Councilperson Di Mondì stated that a few months ago Council passed on a similar Resolution regarding parking on Buttonwood Avenue.

Police officer Rogers said Buttonwood was a different issue, it had a blind curve.

Vote: Passed 4 to 1

Budget

Mr. Barthel reviewed changes to line items from the last reading of the Budget. \$20,000 to purchase a bucket truck from the Municipal Services Commission. The cost would breakdown to \$10,000 to buy it, and Additional money to repair and maintain the truck. The truck would be used for Public Works to trim City trees. Discussion of adding position of Crew Chief to oversee tree work.

Councilperson Di Mondì asked if there would be additional insurance costs is the Public Works employees did start cutting trees.

Kathy Walls stated that the insurance cost would not go up; Public Works employees are already in a high rate group, so insurance costs should not increase.

Discussion of Street Repairs; Mr. Barthel reviewed possibility of taking a \$300,000 loan for 3 years to cover the cost of the repairs, in addition the City would get \$110,000 from Municipal Street Aide, that would allow the City to make needed repairs.

Discussion on carryover for next year, and expenses for the remainder of the year. Mr. Barthel said the carryover should not change. The City will end the year with a surplus of about \$900,000.

Outside requests, Council reviewed requests from New Castle Senior Center, New Castle Community Partnership, New Castle Library, New Castle Historic Society, Beautification Committee, and Arasapha Garden Club. President Ratchford added that the Historical Society requested \$10,000 because of a grant from the Trustees of the same amount, which is dependent on a matching amount.

Councilperson Di Mondì asked for a list of budget lines that are 10% than last year's amount. Kathy Walls said she would supply Council with that list.

Discussion of fee structure for Business License and other City fees. Council President noted that these fees should be revenue neutral, covering the cost of our expenditures. All City fees would be discussed at a future meeting.

Councilperson Di Mondì asked about the energy cost at the Police Station of \$1800 a month. Mr. Barthel said an audit had been done and heat pump needs to be replaced, and the City is getting a quote for that work to be done.

Councilperson Di Mondì asked about the energy cost at the Trolley Barn. Kathy Walls said that projection includes all street lights, and not just the Trolley barn.

President Ratchford asked question regarding the changes in line item Salaries “Actual and Proposed.” Kathy Walls said the changes were due to moving certain positions to other lines in the budget.

Discussion regarding Budget items, Banks Building and renovation plans, there is \$15,000 allocated for the Banks Building.

President Ratchford asked to add \$400 to Historic Area Commission under professional development

The motion to adjourn into executive session was made by Councilperson Megginson, seconded by Councilperson Petty and passed unanimously. Council adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Burgmuller
Council Secretary, City of New Castle